



## Medical abortion

### Clearinghouse Connector – April 2016

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### Introduction

Safe access to abortion is good public health practice and plays an important role in supporting women's health, agency and wellbeing. This Connector focuses on the introduction of medical abortion in Australia.

Available internationally since the late 1980s, medical (non-surgical) abortions have become available in Victoria since mifepristone was added to the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in 2013. Medical abortion offers an alternative to surgery for women in the early weeks of pregnancy. The most well-known method of medication abortion uses mifepristone in combination with another drug, misoprostol, to end a pregnancy up to nine weeks. Mifepristone is also known as RU486 or the 'abortion pill'. <sup>1</sup>

Access to medical abortion is associated with numerous potential benefits, including greater choice and access for women as well as lower costs. Registered GPs are able to provide medical abortions potentially improving access for women in regional and remote areas in particular.

Research is currently underway in Victoria to examine the extent to which the provision of medical abortion has really increased access to abortion for women. Ongoing barriers affecting women's access to abortion may include stigmatisation (of patients and health professionals providing medical abortions), high costs and the multiple appointments required.

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WHV thanks Dr Maggie Kirkman from the Jean Hailes Research Unit at Monash University who reviewed the psychosocial aspects of this Connector.

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### Overview

[Unplanned pregnancy and abortion: what it means legally and socially](#) Royal Women's Hospital, 2011

[Abortion procedures: medication](#) Family Planning Victoria, 2015

[Mifepristone \(Mifepristone Linepharma\) followed by misoprostol \(GyMiso\) for the termination of early pregnancy](#) NPS MedicineWise, 2015

[Medication abortion](#) Children By Choice, 2013

[Registration of medicines for the medical termination of early pregnancy](#) Australia. Therapeutic Goods Administration, 2012

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## Introduction in Australia

[Abortion law in Australia: it's time for national consistency and decriminalisation](#) Medical Journal of Australia, 2015

[Early medical abortion using low-dose mifepristone followed by buccal misoprostol: a large Australian observational study](#) Medical Journal of Australia, 2012

[Early medical termination of pregnancy in Australia using Mifepristone \(RU486\) and Misoprostol \[Slideshow\]](#) Marie Stopes Australia, 2013

[PBS listing won't guarantee access to RU486: here's why](#) Crikey, 2013

[Early medical abortion: safe and available](#) Medical Journal of Australia, 2012

[Early medical abortion: legal and medical developments in Australia](#) Medical Journal of Australia, 2010

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## International models

[Best practice in comprehensive abortion care](#) Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (UK), 2015

[Medication abortion restrictions burden women and providers: and threaten U.S. trend toward very early abortion](#) Guttmacher Policy Review, 2013

[Home use of urine pregnancy tests for medical abortion follow-up](#) The Lancet, 2015

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## Women's experiences and decision-making

[What it's like to take the abortion pill: one woman's experience with RU-486](#) The Age. Daily Life, 2014

[Women's experiences of having an early medical abortion at home](#) Uppsala University, 2013

[Medical versus surgical methods of early abortion: protocol for a systematic review and environmental scan of patient decision aids](#) BMJ Open, 2015

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## Clinical guidelines

[The use of mifepristone for medical termination of pregnancy](#) Royal Australasian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist, 2013

[Therapeutic termination of pregnancy: Queensland Maternity and Neonatal Clinical Guideline](#) Queensland. Department of Health, 2013

[Medical methods for first trimester abortion](#) WHO Reproductive Health Library, 2016

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## Role of GPs

[Safe access to abortion in Victoria: a win for women's health](#) Intouch: Newsletter of the Public Health Association of Australia, 2016 – pp. 12-13

[Conscientious objection not a license to deny treatment](#) Australian Medical Association, 2013

[Medical abortion access extended](#) MJA Insight, 2015

[How medical schools are failing to educate doctors in abortion care](#) The Age. Daily Life, 2015

[Abortion stigma: a reconceptualization of constituents, causes, and consequences](#) Women's Health Issues, 2011

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## Access in regional areas

[Too much hush hush!: rural women tell their stories about access to abortion services In: Proceedings of the 13th National Rural Health Conference](#) Australia. National Rural Health Alliance, 2015

[Abortion, contraception still a problem for women in regional Victoria](#) ABC Local Stories, 2013

[Victorian rural women's access to family planning services: survey report](#) Rural services of the Women's Health Association of Victoria, 2012

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## General access and affordability

[Out-of-pocket costs in Australian healthcare: Children by Choice submission to the Community Affairs References Committee](#) Children by Choice, 2014

[Mobile phones can be used to optimize provision of medical abortion](#) Cell Life, 2013

[Why the \\$12 abortion pill RU486 costs Australian women \\$500](#) Daily Telegraph, 2013

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## Barriers and enablers

[Finally, greater access to RU486: now let's collect abortion data](#) The Conversation, 2013

[Barriers and facilitators of access to first-trimester abortion services for women in the developed world: a systematic review](#) Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health, 2015

[A hard enough decision to make: anti-abortion activism outside clinics in the eyes of clinic users: a report on the comments made by BPAS services users](#) Aston University, 2015

[Risk of violence from the man involved in the pregnancy after receiving or being denied an abortion](#) BMC Medicine, 2014

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## Related websites

[Royal Women's Hospital \(Melbourne\)](#) Unplanned pregnancy and abortion: the facts

[Family Planning Victoria](#) Abortion procedures: medication

[Children By Choice](#) Medication abortion

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## Footnotes

1. Family Planning Victoria (2015). [Abortion procedures: medication](#). Victoria. Department of Health, Melbourne. - (Better Health Channel Factsheet). Accessed on 23/03/2016. ↵
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## How our Clearinghouse can help you

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